

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 11, 2005

USDA holds Farm Forum in Douglas

Douglas – A Farm Bill listening session originally scheduled for Jackson has been moved to Douglas and will be held in conjunction with the Wyoming State Fair. This forum will be a part of the nationwide farm bill listening tour. The public is invited to attend this forum to offer comments on farm bill policy.

"The Farm Bill Forums provide an opportunity for us to hear directly from America's farmers and ranchers. I'm learning a great deal from them," said Johanns. "I am very pleased that our USDA team will also be hosting additional forums that will focus on conservation, rural development and nutrition. I encourage as many citizens as possible to participate in these forums as we prepare for the development of a new farm bill."

Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mark Rey will host the conservation forum on August 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the McKibben Cafeteria on the State Fairgrounds in Douglas.

When participating in the forums, the public is invited to respond to one or more of the following six questions. The format of the forum will also allow an open comment period for general farm bill comments.

1. How should farm policy address any unintended consequences and ensure that such consequences do not discourage new farmers and the next generation of farmers from entering production agriculture?
2. How should farm policy be designed to maximize U.S. competitiveness and our country's ability to effectively compete in global markets?
3. How should farm policy be designed to effectively and fairly distribute assistance to producers?
4. How can farm policy best achieve conservation and environmental goals?
5. How can Federal rural and farm programs provide effective assistance in rural areas?
6. How should agricultural product development, marketing and research-related issues be addressed in the next farm bill?

The public is also welcome to submit their comments via the USDA Farm Bill Forums website at <<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>>. Throughout 2005, Johanns and other senior USDA officials will participate in the Farm Bill Forums that will be held across the country. The dates, locations and times of the forums will continue to be announced as they are scheduled and posted on the USDA website.

More information about the national farm bill listening tour can be found by visiting the website at http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdafarmbill?navtype=SU&navid=FARM_BILL_FORUMS. For more information about the Wyoming Farm Forum, please contact the Wyoming Department of Agriculture at (307) 777-7321.

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